reduction of staff strength in the Office of the DGFT (earlier known as Chief Controller of Imports & Exports). Based on the recommendations of the Committee, the posts identified as surplus are to be abolished in phases.

Growth in Trade and Commerce with Bangladesh and Myanmar

2022. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that trade and commerce of India with Bangladesh and Myanmar has been witnessing steady growth; and

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the items and quantity that comprised most of the imports of Bangladesh and Myanmar from India and vice-versa, year-wise since 1990-91?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Information as requested would be voluminous. These details are available in the publications statistics of the Foreign Trade of India by Countries, Volume I and Volume II Annual Numbers from 1990-91 onward, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.

Export Potential Areas in Middle-East, African and CIS countries

2023. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some areas of Middle-East, African countries and CIS countries which offer export potential for the country are still unidentified;

(b) what action Government propose to take to identify such export potential areas in order to increase the country's exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Norms for Value Based Advance Import Licences

2024. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of new norms specified for value-based advance import licences and the restructuring of the International Price Reimbursement Scheme (IPRS) to help boost exports;

(b) whether Government will also initiate steps to improve quality assurance, standardization of items to international norms; details thereof; and

(c) steps being taken to promote export-promoters from the private sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Details of new norms, including value based norms are contained in the Hand Book of Procedures (Vol. II) for April 1992-March 1997 (As amended upto 31.3.1994) published on 1.4.1994. Thereafter new norms have been notified through various public notices.

Details relating to new scheme called Engineering Products Export (Replenishment of Iron and Steel Intermediate) Scheme in lieu of IPRS has been notified vide a Notification No. 53/(RE)/92-97 dated 1.3.1995 issued by Ministry of Commerce, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.

It is the policy of the Government to encourage and support the efforts for attainment of internationally accepted quality norms. Exporters of products with ISO 9000(series) or the BIS 14000 (series) certification are granted freely tranferable Special Import Licence at a fixed percentage of the FOB value of exports. The details of this scheme are contained in Chapter XIV of EXIM